The details of steps taken by the Government to meet the shortage of officers and soldiers are as under:-

(i) Steps are being taken to make short service commission more attractive.

(ii) Officers are being offered courses at various institutes to enhance their professional training to ensure that they are adequately equipped for a second career, post retirement.

(iii) Undertaking the married accommodation project for overcoming the shortage of secure family accommodation.

(iv) Image projection campaigns undertaken and activities such as Motivational lectures etc. are carried out to encourage youngsters to join the defence forces.

Possible danger of attack on Indian merchant ship

†950. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that warships have been dispatched to sea near Africa;

(b) if so, the purpose of the same;

(c) whether the news about the possible attack on any Indian merchant ship is true; and

(d) if so, the details of countries' whose people pose this threat?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY) : (a) to (d) Warship of the Indian Navy has been deployed in the Gulf of Aden for anti-piracy patrol. The ship patrols the normal route followed by Indian flagged merchant vessels during their passage through the Gulf of Aden. The presence of Indian Navy in the area is expected to help protect the country's sea-borne trade and instil confidence in the sea-faring community, as well as to function as a deterrent for pirates.

There was an attempt of piracy on Indian Flag cargo vessel, MV Jag Arnav, on the 11th November, 2008, which was successfully repulsed by Indian Navy Ship (INS) Tabar.

Pirate gangs are operating along the coastline of Somalia in Gulf of Aden and are reported to belong to Somalia.

One rank one pension for Defence personnel

†951. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether ex-servicemen are demanding one rank one pension;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether defence personnel have rejected the recommendations of Sixth Pay Commission; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.